Fixing of uniform customs and excise duty structure

3245. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is immense instability in industrial sector in the country due to diverse schemes and subsidies of State Governments as well as different Central and customs duty structure in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, what is the Government's response thereto;

(c) whether Government are seriously considering to fix uniform customs and excise duty structure in the country for reducing instability among industrial segment in the country; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Customs duty is applicable uniformly to the entire industrial sector in the country. As regards excise duty, the Government has given exemptions from excise duty in order to encourage industrial development of special category States. Government is not aware of any immense instability in the industrial sector because of such area based exemption.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) At present, there is no proposal under consideration of the Government for withdrawing prematurely the excise duty concessions currently available for the special category States.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Loans to poor farmers in Uttaranchal

3246. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the measures being taken by Government for providing loans at low rate to free the most poor farmers from the clutches of money lenders in Uttaranchal covering the hilly and far-flung areas;

(b) whether Government contemplates any plan for providing seasonal loan to fertilizers, particularly during the sowing seasons; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) NABARD has reported that in order to help the poor farmers including small/marginal farmers and below poverty line families, Government of Uttaranchal has been providing interest subsidy for Short Term/Medium Term Agriculture Loans through Cooperatives since 1st May 2005 at the following rates:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Interest Rate w.e.f. 01.05.2005	Share of State Govt"s. burden in terms of %age
1.	Upto Rs. 50,000/-	5.00%	4.00%
2.	Above Rs. 50,000/-	5.50%	5.50%

The scheme was in vogue for the year 2005-06 and it has been extended for the current year also.

Apart from the above Government of India has decided to provide short term loan to farmers at 7% upto a maximum of Rs. 3 lakhs principal amount from Kharif 2006.

(b) and (c) State Government provides seasonal loan for Fertilisers particularly during sowing season through Cooperatives.

Loans to students for higher studies

3247. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have fixed certain annual amount for providing loans to students for higher studies;

(b) if so, the amount so fixed for higher studies to SC and ST students living in hilly and far-flung areas of Uttaranchal in view of their special categories in the society; and

(c) the amount actually provided to such students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported-that it does not capture data on disbursement under education loan to SC and ST students separately. However, as per latest information made available by RBI,